

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of House Concurrent Resolution 73, introduced by my colleague from Louisiana, Congressman MCCREERY. This bill will establish the first Tuesday in May as National High School Seniors Voter Registration Day, during which volunteers will register high school seniors and other students of voting age on site in their schools.

As I have often stated, my goal as the chairman of the House Administration Committee is to make sure that every citizen who is able to vote does so. As an educator, I have witnessed firsthand the passion and energy our young people possess when given a chance to voice their beliefs, qualities that will serve them well as they enter the voting booth. The National High School Seniors Voter Registration Day will create an additional mechanism to register young men and women and perhaps encourage an early desire to participate in the political process. Accordingly, I call upon my colleagues to support this resolution.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 73 and thank Representative MCCREERY for introducing this very important concurrent resolution which encourages our Nation's youth to register to vote. There are few rights as Americans that are more sacred than the precious right to vote. Discussing this resolution today gives all of us in Congress the opportunity to express our support for the goals set forth by the great State of Louisiana to provide the opportunity for all high school seniors to register to vote at school and to encourage their participation in the political process.

Madam Speaker, you and I and many Members very frequently visit our high schools and speak with our students, and it is so important for the high school seniors to register to vote. A lot of them are very much interested in what goes on in this House, and it is important that we continue to engage in dialogue with them so that they will be participants, active participants in this political process.

In the spring session of 2002, the Louisiana legislature ratified House Concurrent Resolution 20, declaring the first Tuesday in May as Louisiana High School Seniors Voting Registration Day. This resolution encourages students to participate in our political process and in making democracy work. In my home State of California, the legislature passed the Student Voting Registration Act of 2003, which gives the Secretary of State the power to annually provide every high school, community college, and California State university and the University of California systems' campuses with voter registration forms to expand the number of youth participating in the voting process.

The goal of California's law is to ensure that every high school and college student receives a voter registration card with his or her diploma. California is achieving its goal by providing voter registration forms at the start of the school year, including voter registration forms with orientation materials, placing voter registration forms at central locations, and including voter registration forms with graduation materials. I am so pleased and so proud of the State of California for expanding this type of service to our high school students, and I hope that all States follow these models to enfranchise all of our Nation's youth.

I hope that this resolution on the floor today will encourage our youth to participate in our democracy not only by registering to vote and voting, but by becoming poll workers. To facilitate youth involvement in our elections, this summer I offered an amendment to H.R. 5576, the Transportation-Treasury-HUD appropriations bill, to double the funding to the Election Assistance Commission to administer the College Poll Workers Grant program. This amendment was accepted to the bill without objection. I realize that the resolution under consideration today only speaks to high school students, but it highlights an important first step in increasing youth civic engagement and strengthening American democracy.

I support this resolution and the continued goals and ideals of National High School Seniors Voter Registration Day and encourage all eligible students not only to register to vote but to exercise that franchise as well.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. EHLERS. Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to yield as much time as he may consume to the sponsor of the resolution, Mr. MCCREERY of Louisiana.

Mr. MCCREERY. Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to be on the floor today to support this resolution, and I thank the chairman and ranking member of the committee for bringing this to the floor today.

The resolution actually encourages the Congress to support the goals and ideals of National High School Seniors Voter Registration Day. This is a program that was actually started in my hometown of Shreveport, Louisiana, back in 1996; and the results have been indeed noteworthy. Just this year, for example, in the class of 2006, the high school graduating class of 2006, nearly 50 percent of the graduating class registered to vote in Shreveport this year. That is far above what you will find in most cities and towns that don't have a program similar to this in effect.

The goals and ideals of the High School Seniors Voter Registration Day are contained in the program's mission statement; and simply, the program's mission is to register to vote high school seniors and students of voting age on the first Tuesday in May.

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And also, to encourage students to make a lifelong commitment to civic participation in all areas of society by educating them about the importance of voting.

That's the mission. Certainly I would hope this Congress today by its vote here in the House and I hope later in the other body would support the goals and ideals of this program.

Certainly we can think of no better message to send to young people in this country that civic participation is important, in fact critical to the progress of this Nation and perhaps, some would say, to the survival of this Nation.

So I am pleased to be able to present this resolution today endorsing a program that sprang up in my hometown and now has spread across the State of Louisiana and we hope will spread across the Nation. I urge its adoption.

Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD. Madam Speaker, I applaud the gentleman from Louisiana for this very interesting and important resolution. I support the resolution.

Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. EHLERS. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 73.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds of those voting having responded in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. EHLERS. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H. Con. Res. 73.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

#### REGARDING WAIVER OF PATENT AND TRADEMARK REQUIREMENTS IN CERTAIN EMERGENCIES

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4742) to amend title 35, United States Code, to allow the Director of the Patent and Trademark Office to waive statutory provisions governing patents and trademarks in certain emergencies.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 4742

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

**SECTION 1. WAIVER OF PATENT AND TRADE-MARK REQUIREMENTS IN CERTAIN EMERGENCIES.**

Section 2 of title 35, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(e) **WAIVER OF REQUIREMENTS IN CERTAIN EMERGENCIES.**—The Director may waive statutory provisions governing the filing, processing, renewal, and maintenance of patents, trademark registrations, and applications therefor to the extent the Director deems necessary in order to protect the rights and privileges of applicants and other persons affected by an emergency or a major disaster, as those terms are defined in section 102 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5122). A decision not to exercise, or a failure to exercise, the waiver authority provided by this subsection shall not be subject to judicial review.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin.

**GENERAL LEAVE**

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4742 currently under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Wisconsin?

There was no objection.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4742, to amend title 35, United States Code, to allow the Director of the Patent and Trademark Office to waive statutory provisions governing patents and trademarks in certain emergencies.

The devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina in the gulf region affected the ability of applicants, patentees, trademark holders and other interested parties to do business with the PTO.

Following the disaster, the agency invoked as much administrative and statutory authority as it could to accommodate those affected. For example, the PTO created a toll-free hotline for victims to call with questions or problems; attempted to place calls to all registered practitioners in Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana; blocked outgoing mail to those living at relevant ZIP codes in the region; vacated all outstanding examiners' actions, to be remailed at a later time; and accorded "special consideration" to all reductions of patent term adjustments where the applicant delay was attributable to the hurricane.

Despite its best efforts to date, the PTO needs additional authority to provide individuals and businesses relief from certain statutory deadlines, especially those pertaining to the maintenance of granted patents and registered trademarks.

Pursuant to the bill, the PTO may waive statutory provisions governing the filing, processing, renewal and maintenance of patents, trademark registrations and applications to the extent the director deems necessary to protect the rights and privileges of applicants and other persons affected by certain emergencies or a major disaster.

Madam Speaker, this is a non-controversial measure that will ensure that the PTO carries out its statutory mandates in a fair manner during emergency conditions.

I urge Members to support it.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I too rise in support of this legislation. H.R. 4742 has been reported favorably by the Committee on the Judiciary with no controversy.

What we are talking about today responds in part to the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina. We all know that among the hurricane's wide-ranging impact was the destruction of infrastructure and a legal maelstrom caused by judicially and statutorily imposed deadlines for filing documents and making payments. This also is the case with the patent law, which forces individuals and businesses to comply with statutory deadlines for patent and trademark filings in the midst of a natural disaster.

The measure before us is designed to alleviate that pressure by permitting the Patent and Trademark Office director to extend statutory deadlines during emergencies. This section provides an opportunity to aid innovators who, because of devastation, might lose rights to their inventions and creation.

I am pleased to join with those that urge the swift passage of H.R. 4742.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Speaker, I thank the Gentleman from Wisconsin for moving this legislation to the House floor.

The Committee Chairman did a good job of summarizing how the bill works, so I won't repeat his description.

I would point out that granting the additional authority to the PTO Director under H.R. 4742 is consistent with other actions by the Committee and Congress to assist other individuals and institutions in the Gulf region.

This includes enactment of legislation that allows Federal courts during emergency conditions to operate outside of their geographic domains; provide transportation and subsistence expenses for indigent defendants; and delay or toll judicial proceedings.

Madam Speaker, this is a good bill that will help inventors, trademark holders, and other interested parties maintain their intellectual property rights under adverse conditions.

I urge Members to support H.R. 4742.

Mr. CONYERS. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by

the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 4742.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds of those voting having responded in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

**NONPROFIT ATHLETIC ORGANIZATION PROTECTION ACT OF 2006**

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1176) to provide immunity for nonprofit athletic organizations in lawsuits arising from claims of ordinary negligence relating to the passage, adoption, or failure to adopt rules of play for athletic competitions and practices, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows

H.R. 1176

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

**SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

This Act may be cited as the "Nonprofit Athletic Organization Protection Act of 2006".

**SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Amateur Sports and education-based athletics are an important part of our culture. Sports provide a tremendous opportunity for the youth of America to learn the skills of leadership, teamwork, and discipline. Studies have shown that participation in these activities is directly connected to academic achievement and overall social development.

(2) Amateur athletics are integral to the good health and overall well-being of American society. Nonprofit organizations put forward their best efforts to enact rules that are in the best interests of young people. Injuries will occur as a result of the inherent risks involved in sports. These risks, however, should not work to the detriment of the greater good served by amateur athletics.

(3) Young people who participate in school sports and other amateur competition have lower levels of obesity.

(4) Young people who participate in sports tend to be fitter adults, and suffer fewer health problems as they age.

(5) Playing rules in amateur sports are necessary to provide the opportunity for young people to participate in age- and skill level-appropriate competition.

(6) Sport involves intense physical activity. It also involves a certain element of danger. Rule making is anticipatory, and hence a difficult balancing act. Rules committee members face a constant struggle to balance the tradeoffs of limiting risk and preserving the key elements and sound traditions of the sport. Rules makers must draw unambiguous lines; they do not have the luxury of self-protective vagueness. Given the large number of participants and the risks inherent in sport, injuries cannot be avoided. By deciding to partake in competition, athletes assume such risks. Allowing lawsuits based merely on the good faith development of the rules is wrong and unfair.

(7) Rules makers have been the target of an increasing number of lawsuits claiming negligence due to the adoption, or failure to adopt, particular rules for amateur sports.